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Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Chair
Commissioner Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor, State of Oregon
900 Court Street N.E., Suite 254
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our Morrow County plan for the reopening of our communities. We have carefully addressed the criteria that your office outlined to the County Commissioners in briefings. We appreciate these opportunities to work with you directly toward reopening our State.

Morrow County recognizes that reopening our County is critical, and as such, has been a focus of our Emergency Incident Team and the Commissioners in recent weeks.

The Board of Commissioners has coordinated with our public health team, regional health teams, Emergency Operations Center and local health professionals and hospitals to closely consider the health of our communities. We have included the behavioral health professionals in our analysis with growing concerns in this area.

While elements of our plan are currently in motion, many elements are under study and continue changing with the situation. We understand the virus itself and input from health professionals dictate best practices. As the Board of Commissioners, we do not intend to implement procedures in excess of those approved by the State, and will continue to seek guidance from the criteria set forth and evolving.

Some highlights of the Morrow County Plan:

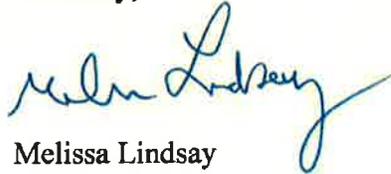
- A phased process with a team in-place to monitor and advise throughout the process
- A Morrow County health team that is trained and staffed for tracing, isolation and care referral
- Engaged business professionals, including Chambers of Commerce, ready to assist with education, training, signage etc., for our business desperate to reopen
- Focus on the CDC and OHA guidance for the health and safety of our communities
- Collaboration with regional health professionals and neighboring Counties

While we remain in tune to the difficulties of this unchartered territory and are committed to the health of our communities, specifically protecting the most vulnerable, it is increasingly apparent that we must focus on the economic health of our rural communities as well. It is imperative that we begin to work with our local businesses to find paths forward. It is critical to our rural

main street way of life and the economic stability of our County that we reopen as soon as possible. We are prepared to work within these plans, your leadership and best practice guidance to safely reopen.

Thank you for consideration of the Morrow County plan. We are eager and prepared to formally begin our phased opening plan and have designated the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Melissa Lindsay, as our point of contact for future follow up, mlindsay@co.morrow.or.us or 541-561-0234.

Sincerely,



Melissa Lindsay



Don Russell



Jim Doherty

CC: Morrow County EMS
Morrow County Public Health
Morrow County Health District, Pioneer Memorial Hospital
Association of Oregon Counties

Attachments: Morrow County Plan to Reopen



Morrow County Framework for Reopening

**Prepared based on Governor Kate Brown's
*Public Health Framework for Reopening Oregon***

**Adopted by Morrow County Board of Commissioners: May 6, 2020
Amended: May 13, 2020**

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for those involved in the process of reopening and give information that will need to be addressed in the implementation of their individual plans.

Due to the ever-changing information associated with COVID-19, these guidelines will be handled as an adaptive management plan or living document. This means that as information is made available, or when state orders or standards are issued, this information would be discussed, addressed and then reflected in this plan as soon as possible.

NOTE:

The Morrow County Framework for Reopening shall be superseded by any less restrictive measures approved or allowed by the Governor or State of Oregon. It is not the intent of the Morrow County Board of Commissioners to require stricter conditions than those imposed by the Governor or State of Oregon.

This document is not intended to conflict with any Federal or State laws. If it is determined that any of the conditions of this framework conflict with Federal or State laws (including Governor Orders), those laws will supersede this framework for opening.

Section I: Overview

Morrow County

Morrow County is a rural/frontier county located in North Eastern Oregon along the Columbia River to the Blue Mountains. It consists of 2,049 square miles and has a population of 11,173 (2010 census). Morrow County has five incorporated towns: Boardman (population: 3,405), Heppner (population: 1,289), Irrigon (population: 1,795), Ione (population: 330), and Lexington (population: 241). The County seat is Heppner, Oregon. The county's economy is historically based on the region's farming and ranching industry, with recent employment opportunities being provided by industry at the Port of Morrow facilities outside of Boardman, Oregon.

Morrow County has had only 10 confirmed COVID-19 cases (.085% of the population of Morrow County), with no hospitalizations, and no fatalities. This fact may be as a result of the county's sparse and spread out population (natural social distancing) and adherence to the government's guidelines on preventative measures to reduce exposure. Residents of Morrow County continue to comply with sound and practical efforts to control exposure and contamination, self-isolation, hygiene, and all other precautionary measures, appropriate to age group, underlying condition, and all of the other relevant considerations.

This document is prepared in response to Governor Kate Brown’s solicitation of working strategies from Oregon counties, which support and enhance the “Public Health Framework for Reopening Oregon,” and in effort to promote a safe and sound opening guidance to our Eastern Oregon County.

Section II: Gating Criteria & Preparedness

Morrow County’s plan for reopening is following the Governor’s objectives and each of the seven prerequisites must be met before Morrow County can enter phase one of Reopening Oregon. While many of these prerequisites are set at the county level, some are set at the Health Region or Statewide level.

- 1. Declining prevalence of COVID-19 (OHA document: “The Three Health Signs We Must See to Reopen Oregon”) a. The percentage of emergency department visits for COVID-19-like illnesses (CLI) are less than the historic average for flu at the same time of year. b. A 14-day decline in COVID-19 hospital admissions.**

With zero hospital admissions, Morrow County would fail to show a decline of admissions over a two-week period with even one admission. Morrow County has been fortunate to have only 10 positive tests to-date. While COVID-19 nationally was spreading rapidly early on, the quick and decisive measures taken have slowed that rate. In Eastern Oregon we have seen very slow growth in the majority of counties. The health and safety of our community is our priority, and the trend of slow or no growth must continue as our goal. However, it would be naive to think that we will not have more cases. Morrow County has created an Emergency Operations Center Review Committee in the Incident Command Structure to continuously monitor the situation, and identified Management Action Point metrics as part of an information-based, phased approach to reopening.

- 2. Minimum Testing Regimen (OHA document: “COVID-19 Strategic Testing Plan for Oregon” and “Oregon COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Strategy”)**

Region 6 and 9, of which Morrow County is a part of, is able to administer COVID-19 testing at a rate of 21.7 per 10,000 people per week. With a current COVID-19 positive of .085%, we are prioritizing symptomatic persons and individuals who came into contact with a known COVID-19 positive person. Planning includes testing of all people in congregate settings if/when there is a positive test. In Morrow County this includes long-term care facilities among others. We are including frontline and essential workers and industries where workers may not be able to practice optimal physical distancing (e.g., agricultural processing, meat packing) as priorities. Morrow County is maintaining an appropriate number of testing sites to accommodate our rural population and working with our medical and other partners to let them know where and how people can get tested. The region is working closely with local public health and OHA to use the collected data to track and trace the spread of the virus in all areas of our population.

Additional testing kits will be necessary to sustain a reopening plan. Morrow County Health District (MCHD) has a contract with Incite Labs. Incite Lab will provide 40 test kits/week for

north and south County. Columbia River Health, the Federally qualified health care clinic, has a contract with Interpath Lab for testing.

Currently, Morrow County is following the guidance provided by OHA when testing patients for COVID-19. Morrow County Health District, as part of Region 9, has an Abbott Now ID point of care machine with testing priority using **OHA's Guidance for Providers Regarding COVID-19 Testing**. Current capacity is 50 cartridges, with cartridges supplied through Ops Center at this point in time, with expectations of increased capacity as manufacturing capacity increases.

Requests for sufficient tests are being managed by Morrow County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Morrow County Health District and Columbia River Health Clinic will continue to use the state's existing Ops Center to make requests for testing media from the state. Oregon State Public Health Lab has contracted with Quest Lab, and the Ops Center has requested 600 testing kits to share with all county health care clinics. Ops Center is an electronic software tool that aids in the management of events.

Access to Testing for Low-Income and Underserved Populations:

The U.S. Census Bureau 2016 estimate of the county population is 11,274; with continued increasing growth occurring at the north end of the county. This area of the county has also experienced growth of the Hispanic population - approximately 65% of the population identified as Hispanic origin compared to Irrigon 29%, Heppner 9.2% and the state's 13%. Morrow County per capita income is less than the state and national average. The unemployment rate is similar to state and national rates, about 5%. The percent of the population living below poverty is similar to the state's 15%. The population living below 200% of the federal poverty level in Boardman is 45% and Irrigon 38%, which are greater than the state's 35%. For children below the age of 18, Boardman, 32%, has a higher rate of poverty than other service areas. Heppner reports 15%, Irrigon 17% and Oregon 23%. Between 36-100% (an average of nearly 79% of the students in Morrow County schools) are enrolled in the free and reduced school lunch program. Forty-five percent of students attending Ione School District are enrolled. Over 30% of the population older than five years of age, speaks English less than very well in Boardman 6%, and Oregon 10%. (*Morrow County Health Assessment, 2018*)

While Morrow County Public Health Department does not directly provide testing, testing is accomplished through the Morrow County Health District, with clinics in Heppner, Ione, Irrigon and Columbia River Health, a Federally Qualified Health Care Center in Boardman. The town of Lexington can access Ione or Heppner clinics. Morrow County has two predominate languages, Spanish and English. Morrow County has a large Latinx community, predominately residing in the communities of Boardman and Irrigon. Morrow County has two bilingual, bicultural Latinx Promotoras trained in contact tracing and case management who work out of the Boardman clinic full-time but are available for all county referrals of Latinx populations. One of the Promotoras is a state certified Community Health Worker who has extensive experience working with CAPECO, the Morrow County School District, local health care provider systems, Community Counseling Solutions, domestic violence services, local food banks, is a certified OHP Assistor and works closely with DHS for community resources for

families. The other Promotoras has extensive experience in community outreach, is a state certified OHP Assistor, is in the process of certifying as a certified Spanish translator, and handles all Spanish translations for press releases for the Morrow County Emergency Command Operations Center and social media. Both Promotoras are available for case management of Spanish as a first language speaking families. Both Promotoras are available to help Spanish speaking families navigate community resources and health care systems. Every clinic has capability and personnel to offer English and Spanish as a first language orally and in written format. All clinics offer testing of those meeting OHA testing guidelines. Testing is set up for drive through clinics, a clinic visit, and the Emergency Department. Morrow County testing is available through the Oregon State Public Health Lab, onsite rapid test, and contracted commercial labs. Testing is offered *at no out-of-pocket expense to patients* per OHA guidelines. Residents who don't meet OHA guidelines but want a test, can access testing in Umatilla County Urgent Care Centers.

3. Contact Tracing System (OHA document : “Oregon’s Plan to Stop the Spread of COVID-19,” “Oregon COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Strategy” and “Interim Investigative Guidelines”)

Morrow County Public Health Department (MCPHD) will take the lead on **Case Investigations** and **Contact Tracing** pursuant to guidelines provided by OHA. See Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Interim Investigative Guidelines, dated April 1, 2020, available through OHA.

MCPHD will provide the staff for Case Investigations and Contact Tracing. This team will be led by the Communicable Disease Coordinator and Clinic RN Supervisor. Our COVID-19 Investigation Team is composed of seven MCPHD staff members, and two Eastern Oregon Modernization Collaborative staff members, trained in Contact Investigations. Four of the above listed team members have ORPHEUS (Oregon’s Communicable Disease Database) access. Oregon Health Authority has provided information that Contact Tracing teams should consist of a 15 per 100,000 ratios. Morrow County has trained contact tracers at a rate of nine tracers for the population of 11,603. Two of the contact tracers are of Hispanic ethnicity and are bicultural and bilingual, meeting the make-up of Morrow County.

Should additional support be needed, MCPHD will contact OHA Acute and Communicable Disease Program for additional assistance.

4. Isolation Facilities.

Should an individual or family that is experiencing a house-less situation contract COVID-19 or be identified as a contact of a known COVID-19 case, Morrow County will work within our EOC, including local partners, Public Health and Community Counseling Solutions to source lodging for them. We would also use our local services to provide the necessities of daily living, food, laundry, and medications while they are kept in isolation. We will also connect them with

housing and food assistance programs or other services as requested by the family. Areas identified as possible isolation facilities include: Morrow County-owned facilities, hotels in north and south county, etc.

Isolation Strategy

Unless there is a need for medical services, it is recommended those who test positive for COVID-19 and/or have signs and symptoms, stay at home until they have been symptom-free for 72 hours (three days). By following these strategies, it will help protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries, high risk facilities, transportation, and all other sectors.

Testing/Response Availability

Morrow County is prepared to contact trace 95% of all new cases within 24 hours following OHA Investigative Guidelines Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Interim Investigative Guidelines, May 1, 2020.

An Emergency Operations Center/Medical Case Review Unit has been created in the Incident Command Structure. This group is made up of Morrow County Economic Development Coordinator, representative of local health care providers, Public Health Officials, and Emergency Management. This Unit will continuously be evaluating the numbers of tests done, positive tests and the information collected during contact tracing. Morrow County has residential long-term facilities, group homes, and food processing facilities. Morrow County does not have a jail but contracts with Umatilla County.

Example Response: Three Outbreak Situations

A. Food Processing Facility

If an outbreak is confirmed in a food processing facility, the Department of Agriculture will be notified and they will be responsible for monitoring food safety, facility services, sanitation, and decontamination. The Local Health Department (LHD) will confirm and notify the state of an outbreak. The state and LHD will determine the local capacity for testing, disease investigation, contact tracing, and monitoring. If the outbreak exceeds local capacity, the LHD will request the state rapid COVID Team assist in the testing and outbreak investigation.

B. Residential Care Facility

Morrow County has residential care facilities including group homes. If an outbreak is confirmed in a residential facility, the state will be immediately notified and guidance requested. Morrow County has a rapid test machine, and all residents and staff can be tested if deemed appropriate during disease investigation. Positive cases will be isolated and assessed for appropriate level of care. If the outbreak exceeds local capacity, LHD will request the state rapid COVID Team assist in the testing and outbreak investigation.

C. Jail Facility

Morrow County contracts with Umatilla County Jail for beds. Morrow and Umatilla Counties partner and collaborate in many areas, and this response/work would be added to that list of partnerships. If there is an outbreak confirmed in the jail, Morrow County will partner with the Umatilla County Health Department and the Umatilla County Jail Health Administer to provide test kits for Abbott ID Rapid Test Machine, OSPHL test kits, and collaborate with partners for courier service to designated test lab. Umatilla County will confirm and notify the state of the outbreak. Umatilla County jail/Umatilla County Health Department will be responsible for mandatory reporting to the state, administering tests, disease investigations, contact tracing, and surveillance. Morrow and Umatilla Counties contract and collaborate on many levels making this additional work a streamlined process.

5. Morrow County will help to educate and follow the Statewide Sector Guidelines (OHA detailed reference documents: Sector-specific guidelines by sector)

Each sector must adhere to Oregon Health Authority statewide guidelines to protect employees and consumers, make the physical workspace safer and implement processes that lower risk of infection in the business. Outreach to our economic partners and chambers has already brought forth proactive plans for reopening, while protecting the health and safety of our citizens. Morrow County will work with our partners to educate, prepare signage and proactively monitor activities.

6. Sufficient Health Care Capacity (OHA document: “Guidance on resumption of non-emergent and elective procedures at hospitals”)

The region including Morrow County is able to accommodate a 20% increase in suspected or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, compared to the number of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations in the region at the time Executive Order No. 20-22 was issued. This metric is measured at the Health Region level, not at the county level. Morrow County recognizes we are currently able to meet these criteria and move into phase one.

7. Sufficient PPE Supply (OHA document: “Guidance on resumption of nonemergent and elective procedures at hospitals”)

PPE supply and the current supply chain are adequate for the needs identified within the County. Many sectors do not need medical-grade PPE. With the implementation of cloth/reusable face masks, there will not be an additional drain on the current supply chain for medical-grade PPE. The sector with the most need for medical-grade PPE is hospitals, first responders (police, medical, fire), clinics, etc. They are prioritized as follows: 1.) Hospital, First Responders, 2.)

Clinics. We have been in communication with this group to ensure we have adequate resources to meet a 30-day supply, as well as surge needs of the following PPE items: N95 Masks, Surgical Masks, Gowns, Gloves, Face Shields, Cloth Face Masks (used to cover N95/Surgical Masks) if face shields are not used. Until the supply chain is fully back to normal, reuse guidelines will remain in effect.

Plan for Reopening

A phased approach to reopening our economy will keep the COVID-19 positive growth rate curve or line relatively flat. If no management action points are deemed reached within a two-week period, which would be the incubation period of the virus, then it could be permissible to move to the next phase with approval of the Emergency Operations Center Review Committee. The committee will review capacity of existing Gating Criteria & Preparedness per Governor Brown’s Reopening Oregon Framework including the expansion of Public Health’s capacity of case identification, contact tracing, and Isolation and Quarantine. Taking small, calculated steps will allow the economy to start reopening through a strategic approach that protects the health of the community. The EOC review Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for decisions to move forward, hold or move backwards in the recommended reopening process.

An **Emergency Operations Center/ Medical Case Review Unit** has been created in the Incident Command Structure. This group is made up of Morrow County Economic Development Coordinator, representative of local health care providers, Public Health Officials, and Emergency Management. This Unit will continuously be evaluating the numbers of tests done, positive tests and the information collected during contact tracing. They could change the Management Action Points based on information, such as positive COVID tests from healthcare workers or residents and/or staff of a Long-Term Care Facility (LTCF).

Approved by the Chair of the Morrow County Board of Commissioners:

Dated this 13th day of May 2020.

**MORROW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MORROW COUNTY, OREGON**



Melissa Lindsay, Chair